



March 1, 2023  
Lori McAdam  
Political Organizer, NBRJC

Co-chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Currey, Ranking Members Representative McCarty and Representative Berthel, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Lori McAdam. I am a resident of New Britain. I am a single working class mother. I am a Board Member and Political Organizer with the New Britain Racial Justice Coalition (NBRJC). The NBRJC is a grassroots organization based in New Britain, Connecticut. Our membership is composed of roughly 60 working-class people from the greater New Britain area who organize for racial and economic justice, and do so through mutual aid, political education, and community action.

I am testifying in strong support of S.B. 1095: An Act Concerning School Resource Officers.

All students deserve to feel safe, secure, and supported in their places of learning. Yet too often our schools rely on policing to keep children in line, rather than funding professionals trained to deliver students necessary developmental and behavioral health resources.

Our youth need resources not restraints. Our youth need the care, guidance, and support to learn coping skills, not to be punished for acting out. We, as adults, need to figure out the WHY. Why are our youth acting out? We need to stop punishing our youth without giving them the resources to heal and learn. There is a saying that says "Where there is drama there is trauma." There needs to be prevention and intervention services for our youth to heal from the generations of trauma they have been through. Not to mention the impact the pandemic had on the students now entering the grade levels who employ SROs. These students missed crucial milestones by not learning social and developmental skills. Things like problem solving and conflict resolution in a group setting. Returning to a learning environment that is policed is adding more trauma.

Our students need supportive programs and policies that keep them on the path of educational attainment, and, at the same time, give them the socioemotional support and resources they need. We need to build more academic recovery supports, infuse youth development in schools, and provide mentorships and mental health services. Every dollar spent on an SRO is one less dollar that could go towards proactively and positively supporting our children with data driven solutions.

We need to END the school to prison pipeline and give our teachers the resources to teach our children in a safe and inclusive environment. There is a plethora of documentation of the racial discrimination and inequity in our nation's system of policing. The impact of these inequities directly falls on our black and latino/a/x youth. The presence of School Resource Officers (SROs), law enforcement in schools, negatively impacts our youth into their places of learning. It has been proven that students who were



diverted to social services or school officials rather than arrested were 2.4 times less likely to offend than students who were arrested for engaging in similar behavior.

According to research by [Connecticut Voices for Children](#), there's no evidence School Resource Officers (SROs) make students or staff safer, but schools with SROs have more arrests and more expulsions than their peer institutions without SROs.

The overpopulation of school resource officers, primarily in urban schools, has impacted children of color more than anyone. Also according to research of [Connecticut Voices for Children](#):

- The [percentage](#) of Black students arrested was over 17 times as high in schools with SROs, and the percentage of Latino/a/x students arrested was over ten times as high in schools with SROs.
- [Students](#) in schools with SROs were over three times more likely to be arrested than students in schools without SROs. For Black and Latino/a/x students, the risk of arrest was over five times higher in schools with SROs than in schools without SROs.
- [Students](#) in schools with SROs were 1.58 times as likely to be expelled as those without an SRO. The increased risk of expulsion was even greater for Black and Latino/a/x children.

Research shows that the presence of SROs in schools increases the likelihood of discipline and arrest for Black and Latino/a/x students, without providing measurably better educational or safety outcomes. I truly believe that our youth have the ability to co-create safe futures if they are given the proper tools and support for their growth and well being. Violence is a systemic issue that stems from decades of repression, marginalization, removal of financial and educational resources. Communities of color, poor communities, and immigrant communities have been undermined in so many ways throughout these decades. Violence is a result of lack of mental health care, affordable housing, guaranteed basic income, proper child care, opportunities for young people, safe recreational spaces, and so much more.

I strongly support S.B. 1095. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote in favor of this bill. Together, we can build an educational system that centers the social-emotional well-being of students through care, resources, learning, and restoration.

Thank You for your time,  
Lori McAdam  
Board Member/Political Organizer, NBRJC